## **INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS/Bureau of Indian Affairs**

SUBJECT: Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1996 . . . H.R. 1977.

Domenici amendment No. 2296.

**ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 36-61** 

**SYNOPSIS:** As reported, H.R. 1977, the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1996, will provide \$12.053 billion in new budget authority, which is \$69 million more than the House-passed bill provided, \$1.76 billion less than the Administration requested, and 11 percent less than the fiscal year (FY) 1995 level.

**The Domenici amendment** would restore \$200 million of a proposed \$270 million cut for Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) programs and would offset that amount by making reductions in appropriations for other accounts in the Department of the Interior.

## **Those favoring** the amendment contended:

The recent budget resolution by this Congress proposed massive reductions in spending. It did not propose across-the-board cuts, however; priorities were set. For a few areas, Congress did not recommend cuts. One such area was Indian services. In the past 200 years, the United States has negotiated 800 treaties with Indian tribes, has signed about half of them, and has violated every one of them. Indians have been brutally and dishonorably treated. Today, a huge percentage of Indians still live in abject poverty. Simple amenities like running water and electricity are often lacking. Unemployment levels are enormous, medical treatment is shoddy, and poverty is rampant. Relations between the United States and Indian tribes are still mainly governed by treaties. America has committed itself to protecting Indian native ways of life. It has solemn obligations to assist in the governance of reservations. Over the years, the abuses by Indian agents on reservations have been legendary. Treaty obligations have been routinely ignored. With this background, we ask our colleagues to consider this bill before us. It will cut \$270 million of the funds that go to Indian tribes for them to govern themselves. These tribes do not impose taxes; they rely on the United States for funding to run their governments. Cutting \$270 million will be a reduction in real terms of 27 percent. The money they need for their schools, their police forces, and all other parts of their governments will be slashed. This cut is extreme. The Domenici amendment would restore \$200 million of

(See other side)

<b>YEAS</b> (36)		NAYS (61)			NOT VOTING (3)	
Republicans Democrats (19 or 37%) (17 or 38%)		Republicans (33 or 63%)		Democrats (28 or 62%)	Republicans (2)	Democrats (1)
Burns Campbell Craig D'Amato DeWine Domenici Faircloth Helms Inhofe Kassebaum Kempthorne Kyl McCain Murkowski Nickles Packwood Simpson Stevens Thomas	Akaka Baucus Bingaman Conrad Dodd Dorgan Exon Feingold Harkin Heflin Inouye Kohl Moynihan Murray Pell Simon Wellstone	Abraham Ashcroft Bennett Bond Brown Chafee Coats Cochran Cohen Coverdell Dole Frist Gorton Gramm Grassley Gregg	Hatch Hatfield Hutchison Jeffords Lott Lugar McConnell Pressler Roth Santorum Shelby Smith Snowe Specter Thompson Thurmond Warner	Biden Boxer Breaux Bryan Bumpers Byrd Daschle Feinstein Ford Glenn Graham Hollings Johnston Kennedy Kerrey Lautenberg Leahy Levin Lieberman Mikulski Moseley-Braun Nunn Pryor Reid Robb Rockefeller Sarbanes	1—Offic 2—Necc 3—Illne 4—Othe SYMBO AY—Ai	LS: nnounced Yea nnounced Nay ired Yea

VOTE NO. 374 AUGUST 9, 1995

the proposed cut. This restoration is the least we should do. Therefore, we urge our colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment.

## **Those opposing** the amendment contended:

Our colleagues are only looking at one account. Overall, this bill contains two-thirds of all Federal funding for Indian programs. One account in this bill will be cut substantially. However, when all accounts are totaled, one finds that funding will be cut only 8 percent for Indian programs, when all other programs will be cut by an average of 11 percent. Few other functions of Government, on this bill or on any other bill, will probably fare as well. In fact, our understanding is that when funding for other Native American programs passes, the end, total result for this year will be a 5 percent cut in Indian services.

With that said, we feel we should make a few comments about the general impression our colleagues have given us that the solution to the problems that Indians have today is more Federal dependency. It seems somewhat odd to us that the same Senators who argue so strenuously for the need for independence when speaking about welfare reform can in the next breath insist that Indians need only more Federal services. Our colleagues tell us that Indian reservations do not tax--that is their choice. Many reservations have high standards of living. Perhaps the first thing we must admit is that not all Indians have the same problems. The problems, in fact, are concentrated in particular areas. Maybe it is time that we looked at the fact that Native Americans are entitled to free medical care, and, like other free medical care that is provided by the Government, that care has historically been substandard. Perhaps we should look at Native Americans who have relied on Federal welfare programs, and we should see that they have the same social pathologies as do inner city residents who have relied on such programs. No one wants for anyone else to live in poverty, and we are all genuinely dismayed by the conditions on many reservations. Our colleagues are absolutely correct that the problems of Indians have been overlooked. However, we are not certain that the answer is to say that due to treaty obligations we must make sure we pay certain amounts of money. Better solutions should be sought.

As for this amendment, though, our colleagues are making a mistake by focusing on one account. They need to look at the overall picture, and realize that Native Americans are already being treated generously by this bill. We will not favor making cuts in areas that are already being cut by an average of 11 percent in order to treat them even more generously. We accordingly oppose the Domenici amendment.